

新加坡轉業為教師的現象

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摘要

背景：國立教育學院是新加坡唯一的師資培訓院校，為新加坡教育體系培訓新的教師。過去十年，學院為新進學員所開辦的培訓班，收生人數在經濟不景氣期間達到頂峰，其中不乏從別的行業投身教師專業的。

目的：這篇文章探討為什麼一些人中途投身教育事業，以及他們對教育工作的看法。

調查物件與方法：作為國立教育學院一項長期研究計畫的一部分，學院於 2004 年 7 月進行了一項問卷條查，以瞭解新進教師對教師這門專業的態度，還有對教學技能和知識所持的看法。文章彙報了 80 位學員中途轉業的原因，調查對象是年齡較另兩項課程大的一年制大學文憑班小學部學員。此外，也抽樣與四位學員訪談，瞭解他們對這項專業的期望。

總結：中途轉業的學員是為了個人成就感才加入教師行業的。國立教育學院因此得為這些學員建立工作經驗與教育的聯繫。

關鍵字：師資培訓，中途轉業。

Choosing Teaching as a Second Career in Singapore

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Abstract :

Background: As the sole teacher provider in Singapore, the National Institute of Education (NIE) prepares all new teachers for the Singapore's Education System. In the last decade, NIE's enrolments for initial teacher preparation programmes have grown significantly. There has been a parallel increase in the number of career changers entering the teaching profession. This article explores why a number of career changers entered the field of education as well as their perception of the field of teaching.

Aims: To investigate key factors and reasons why career changes choose teaching as a second career.

Sample: A research survey was administered to 80 Postgraduate-in-Education (Primary) programme student teachers who chose teaching as a second career. This paper presents the survey findings on their reasons for choosing teaching as a career. The paper also reports the interviews of 4 randomly selected second career student teachers in the programme and the perspectives that they bring into the teaching profession.

Method: Survey and interviews were conducted and the responses received were tabulated.

Results: The results found that second-career teachers do not consider the lower compensation associated with the new profession as the main decisive factor for choosing teaching. The trade-off is the increased personal satisfaction.

Conclusion: It is also important to help second career teachers make connections between prior work and teaching. With increased numbers of career changers entering the field of teaching, an important factor to seriously consider is how to fulfill the expectations of the second career changers in those intrinsic and altruistic motives that they deem important.

Keywords: teacher education, teaching as a second career

Introduction

In many countries, increasingly men and women are leaving careers in

business and the professions to take up teaching (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990;

Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Novak & Knowles, 1992), and in the United States this has given rise to the need for alternative certification (Wright, 2001). Many of these 'non-traditional' (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998) students have had extended work experience of some form including the army prior to entering their initial teacher preparation programmes. In fact in the USA the army forms a significant pool of second career candidates. The potential of entering teaching for this group of qualified people – Troops to Teachers - has not been fully tapped (Feistritzer, www.ncei.com).

Given their background of employment and professional experience their reasons for joining teaching may not be entirely identical to the traditional students. Previous research has established that there exists a wide range of reasons why the traditional student teachers are attracted to the profession and these include factors related to 'interpersonal' reasons such as the opportunity to work with young people, the joy and satisfaction in witnessing a child's learning process and being able to make a difference to their students and to society at large (Lai et al, 2005; Stiegelbauer, 1992; Synder et al, 1995; Phillips & Hatch, 1999).

There are many reasons why second career teachers switch from their first professions to enter the teaching profession. Several studies have shown that the primary reason for this group to enter the profession was to make a difference in pupils' lives and to help pupils in general. Another reason was that for most second career teachers, a re-evaluation of their life's goals has taken place and therefore a lot of thought has gone into this decision to become a teacher at this point in their lives (Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Serow & Forrest, 1994, Taylor, 2001). This

decision may be influenced by a sense of low satisfaction in the previous jobs and the feeling that they were not making a difference. It has also been established that many of these second career student teachers are motivated by intrinsic rewards such as the opportunity to express creative abilities, the enjoyment of the challenges and responsibilities, the opportunity for continual learning and growth and the chance to fulfill a lifelong dream (Dieterich & Panton 1996, Phillips & Hatch 1999). Dill (1994) found that older teacher education students have well thought out reasons for moving into teaching and these include viewing teaching as the opportunity to use one's mind, an opportunity for a life-time of self growth, a belief that all children can learn, a way to return time and talent back to the community, and a way to demonstrate the high value of education. In her report of a study of troops to teachers in the USA Feistritzer (www.ncei.com) found that the three most important reasons for joining teaching as a second career are, in order of importance, the 'desire to work with young people', 'value or significance of education in society,' and 'interest in the subject-matter field.'

In exploring the experiences of mid-life individuals who have entered the profession of teaching as second-career teachers, Power's (2002) study noted the following:

- a. Life-changing events prompted individuals to change careers. Compared to their previous careers, teaching did not provide the monetary compensation for the amount of time, effort, and stress related to the job. They chose to enter the field to 'serve' and 'make a difference'. Each decided to follow their 'calling' and become a teacher. To teach was the fulfilment of a goal, a

- dream, and a personal commitment to give of oneself.
- b. Each participant noted similarities and differences between their past occupations and their role as a teacher. Similarities expressed were focused on the realm of providing a service. Service to their students and knowing that they were making a positive impact was a major form of self-satisfaction for second career teachers.
 - c. Second career teachers considered their greatest challenge to be the students. Discipline, class disruptions, and unmotivated students were the factors which led most of the participants to question their decision to be teachers. As a by-product of the problems associated with classroom management and unmotivated students, second career teachers found that fatigue and exhaustion were pervasive.
 - d. Participants noted that their previous work experiences helped them to readjust their approaches to student discipline and aided in their future successes relating to classroom management. Past work experiences helped second career teachers meet the challenges of the students.
 - e. The second career teachers had often been in supervisory or highly collaborative capacity. Their perceptions of their administrators were not overly favourable. The lack of time given to them by their administrators was the most common issue of concern for the participants. They became reluctant to approach their supervisors. The expectations of leadership were not met for second career teachers and most felt that their administrators did not care about them as a person. The participants had to rely on their own initiative and utilise their own past experiences to solve their problems. As a result, they developed a strong personal sense of mission and purpose. The second career teachers did not feel that their past experiences and abilities were being utilised, nor did they perceive they were respected for the accomplishments in their past careers.
 - f. The desire to 'serve' was the impetus for second career teachers to enter teaching. All participants entered the profession with a strong desire to make a difference in the lives of students. They viewed a career in teaching as a worthwhile occupation that would allow them to contribute.

In the move to teaching, career switchers often bring an articulated sense of mission and urgency, a strong sense of commitment, maturity and professionalism (Freidus 1992, 1994). The collective life wisdom of second-career teachers enables them to approach teaching with a multitude of responses to critical teaching situations. Often second-career teachers utilize past experiences to solve current problems and to help explain complex content to students (Draper, 1999; Powers, 1999; Sturtevant, 1996,). Draper and Sharp (1999) compared Scottish primary teachers trained in 1-year and 4-year teacher training programs, using data from several sources. Results show that the second career graduates were more diverse and brought a wider range of experience to the teaching profession.

However studies also show that having valuable skills, experiences, and knowledge developed through a previous career does not automatically make the transfer to teaching an easy one for career switchers. Second career teachers possess maturity and skills from previous careers that they could transfer to teaching but these are not always recognised by the second career teachers and are not easily transferred to classroom practice (Mayotte 2003). For example, not only do second career teachers need to be taught pedagogical strategies that will enable them to adapt prior knowledge and skills for the classroom, their preconceived notions, attitudes, and expectations about teaching shaped by previous work experiences need to be ameliorated as they transit to teaching. One aspect in the transition to teaching to be considered is the provision of much-needed support to the novice second career teacher, which career switchers do not necessarily receive. This is because they are often not viewed as novices due to their age and experience (Freidus 1992, 1994).

In a study to explore the perceptions of second career teachers regarding the influences of previous careers on their classroom practice (Mayotte 2003), 4 second career teachers were followed in a case study during their novice year of teaching. The following were reported:

- a. Participants named competencies developed in their previous careers that benefited their teaching, including knowing-why, knowing-how, and knowing-whom.
- b. Despite the experience of positive influences of previous careers on their current teaching, the teachers did note the need for support. They acknowledged that

previous career experiences were not enough for successful transition to teaching.

- c. Aiding career switchers in their recognition of previously developed career competencies and helping them to build upon their life and career experiences are instrumental support mechanisms that can be provided to this group of novice teachers.
- d. Providing career switchers with footholds includes opportunities to relate their current experiences to past ones and build upon them. In this way, they will be provided with stepping stones to success and will be more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Stepping stones are seen/interpreted in light of the 3 reported competencies.

The Study

This paper investigates key factors and reasons why career changes choose teaching as a second career. As part of a longitudinal study on beginning teachers' attitudes towards teaching and their perception of knowledge and skills about teaching, a research survey was administered to all student teachers entering the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore in July 2004. As the sole teacher education institute in the country, NIE prepares all new teachers for teaching in Singapore schools. In the last decade, NIE's enrolments for initial teacher preparation programmes have grown significantly with peaks in the recession years. It is also evident that there has been a parallel increase in the number of career changers entering the teaching

profession in the last decade.

As the sole teacher education institute of Singapore, NIE strives to ensure that its programmes remain current and relevant to student teachers including second careers. The perceptions and beliefs that motivate career changers to the teaching professions may suggest “differentiated” preparation to better support their development. By and large, teacher education programmes have not considered the second career teachers in the design and planning of programmes and courses (Serow & Forrest, 1994). The current study is meant as the initial phase of a longer longitudinal study into the efficacy of teacher preparation and professional development programmes offered at NIE. Armed with a wide spectrum of work exposure and life experiences, these second career teachers are different from their younger counterparts entering teaching as a first professional choice both in profile and in motives (Goh & Atputhasamy, 2001). To this end, this paper aims to present data on why second career student teachers from the one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE Primary) programmes, NIE have selected teaching as an alternative career.

Method

197 student teachers, out of a total enrollment of 284 in the PGDE-Primary programme, responded to a questionnaire when they were first admitted into the National Institute of Education in July 2004. Student teachers enrolled in the programme are sponsored by the Ministry of Education. Upon completing their PGDE, they will be posted out to teach in schools. This is a one-year programme that prepares graduates to teach in a Singapore primary school. The questionnaire

required participants to self-report on their main reasons for choosing teaching as a career. Relevant personal profile data such as gender, age, educational background, previous job were also collected. Out of the 197 PGDE (Primary) students teacher who responded 80 indicated in the questionnaire that teaching was not their first job/career.

The motives for entering teaching from the questionnaire were analysed by identifying common themes from the statement responses of the participants. Each of the responses was then coded according to the identified themes. The coding was then validated by the study researchers, checking for accuracy and frequency. The frequency counts for each of the reasons were then tabulated for comparison between respondents of the different programmes (Appendix I). Low, et al 2006 show a detailed explanation of these themes and codes:

- 01: Love for children, young children
- 02: Passion/interest for Teaching
- 03: To fulfill a mission
- 04: To answer a calling
- 05: For love of the subject
- 06: Job factor/Job Fit
- 07: Financial reasons
- 08: Inspired by role models
- 09: Teaching as a stepping stone
- 10: Others

Results and Findings

The PGDE (Pri) 2004 intake has a mean age of 25.65 years with an age range of 22 – 39 years of age. There were 19.8% males and 80.2 % females. 40.62 % or 80 student teachers indicated in the questionnaire that teaching was not their first job/career, out of these 18 are males and 62 females.

The data show that there were 4

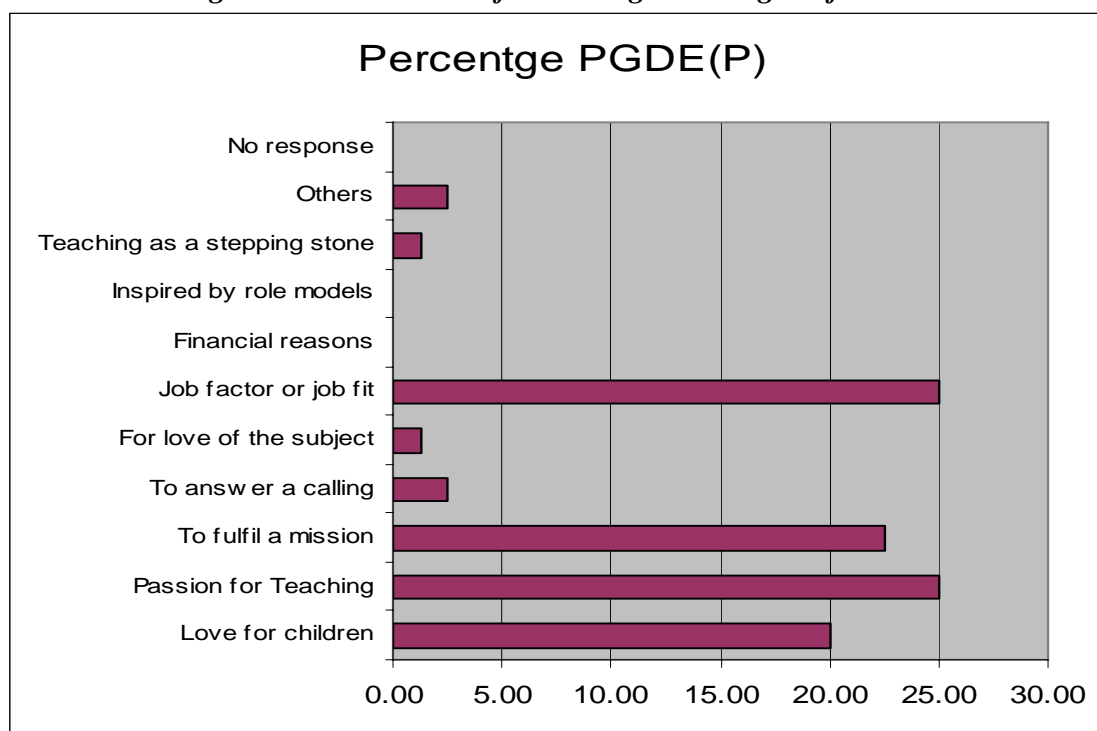
main reasons why the 80 second career student teachers chose the teaching profession as a second career (Table 1 & Figure 1). The two most important reasons of almost equal importance were *Passion for Teaching* and *Job factor or job fit*, cited by 25% of the second career PGDE (Pri) student teachers. Two

other main reasons were *To fulfill a mission* (22.5%) followed by *Love for children* (20%). The rest of the reasons were given by less than 7.5% of the respondents. The data for the whole cohort of PGDE (Pri) – 197 student teachers, are shown in brackets in these 4 top categories in Table 1.

Table 1: Main reason for choosing the teaching profession as a second career

Reason	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Love for children	16	20.00 (28.43)
Passion for Teaching	20	25.00 (24.87)
To fulfill a mission	18	22.50 (16.15)
To answer a calling	2	2.50
For love of the subject	1	1.25
Job factor or job fit	20	25.00 (19.29)
Financial reasons	0	0.00
Inspired by role models	0	0.00
Teaching as a stepping stone	1	1.25
Others	2	2.50
No response	0	0.00
Total	80	100

Figure 1: Main Reason for Joining Teaching Profession



This is consistent with the findings of Goh and Atputhasamy (2001) of fresh student teachers. The reasons for entering teaching were altruistic in nature and included reasons such as the love for working with children and the love for teaching. Studies have shown that the primary reason for second career teachers to enter the profession was to make a difference in pupils' lives to help pupils in general (Taylor 2001, Serow & Forrest 1994). Student teachers under 25 years were more strongly influenced by a love of children, whereas older student teachers were significantly more likely to consider a sense of vocation / professionalism and employment opportunities of a teaching career (Edmonds et al 2002; Moran et al., 2001).

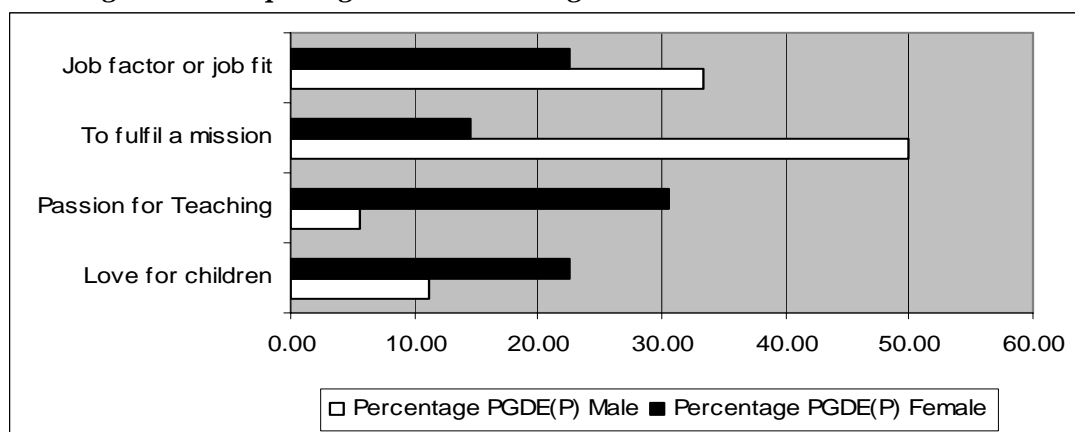
The findings also show that none cited *Financial Reasons* as the main reasons for coming into teaching. Also mentioned in the interviews, some second career student teachers said that they suffered a pay cut when they made the switch to the teaching profession. Another positive finding is that only 1.25 % saw *Teaching as a Stepping Stone* to other careers. The low ratings for both these categories may imply that the student teachers believe in the roles and work as teachers. This is also in

accordance with other research findings where extrinsic motivation and reasons for joining teaching are not the main factors.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of males and females in the four top categories for choosing teaching as a second career. The top two of four categories for the males are *To fulfill a mission* (50%) and *Job factor or Job fit* (33.33%). On the contrary, these two categories are bottom two categories for the females - *To fulfill a mission* (14.52%) and *Job factor or Job fit* (21.58%). The top two categories for the females *Passion for teaching* (30.65%) and *Love for children* (23%) were the bottom two categories for males - *Passion for teaching* (5.56%) and *Love for children* (11.11%).

The findings indicate that second career male student teachers see the teaching profession as fulfilling a mission (a calling) and that the job fit is important. As caring and love for the young as well as passion for the act of teaching (rather than the profession) could be seen to be a more feminine trait, this may also be a contributing factor for the high ranking of these reasons among the females second career student teachers.

Figure 2: Comparing the 4 Main categories between Males and Females



Conclusion

Based on many studies of motives for teaching three categories are evident – extrinsic (remuneration and other benefits), intrinsic (the enjoyment of teaching and the school environment) and altruistic (making a difference to young lives). Past studies have also shown that not all three factors influenced the motivation of an individual, that each factor carried a different emphasis and that there were gender differences as well (Moran et al., 2001). The above study of second careers in Singapore has shown that the altruistic and intrinsic motives far outweigh the extrinsic factors, and between genders there are obvious differences even for the same motive. In the move to teaching, career switchers often bring an articulated sense of mission and agency, a strong sense of commitment, maturity and professionalism. As in other countries, the transition to teaching in most cases in Singapore is made without the benefit of financial gain.

The transition to teaching is made without gain in the financial arena. Some second-career teachers do not consider the lower compensation associated with the new profession as the main decisive factor. The trade-off is the increased personal satisfaction gained by teaching and providing a service that influences lives. Second career changers have a strong desire to contribute to society and to make a difference in children's lives, driving them to choose teaching as a career (Powers, 2002). The second career teachers also expressed during their interviews their added value of being able to connect school to the working world. They are able to draw on their training and working experience to bring a realistic perspective to their students in

school. Their previous experience enables them to have a wider perspective on teaching.

Further, for some to teach was a calling. Whenever a teacher has a sense of service and selflessness, and feels that "this is what I was meant to do," or "I've always known this is what I would do," or "I know I'm doing the right thing," or even "I can't imagine ever doing anything else," the teacher's experience is consistent with the notion of calling, or vocation. When asked about their decision to change careers, second career teachers often identify a desire to 'do something worthwhile,' 'make a difference,' or 'serve society.' Whether or not they identify a faith aspect to their desire, the notion of calling, or vocation, is fulfilled (Mayotte, 2003).

Little or no information exists on second career teachers in Singapore. This study has highlighted the non-extrinsic motives as being strong in the decision to go into teaching, both from the survey results as well as from the interviews of the four cases of second career candidates. While the Ministry of Education, Singapore has been receptive of second careers entering the teaching profession because of the benefits of varied experiences and skills that they bring from their previous work places to the school environment, an important factor to seriously consider is how to fulfill the expectations of the second career changers in those intrinsic and altruistic motives that they deem important.

Armed with a wide spectrum of work exposure and life experience, these teachers are substantially different from their younger counterparts entering teaching as a first professional choice. With habits and patterns well established, second-career teachers may possess

elements of rigidity that can place them in a high-risk category during pre-service training. And this may be further exacerbated during the first year of induction. It is important to help second career teachers make connections between prior work and teaching. After teacher preparation and career switch, would the school environment meet their expectations and therefore inspire them to stay or leave the profession in disillusionment? A larger demographic study of career changers, and a fuller study of the issues that concern them and how they fare "on the job," might assist in recruitment, retention and professional development for these teachers.

It is becoming increasingly evident that as the demand for teachers in Singapore increases, the sources of supply will have to come from non-traditional sources such as second career changers. However, for them to remain a viable source their motives for entering teaching must be recognised and their expectations of teaching as a new career must be met. Providing career switchers with opportunities to relate their current experiences to past ones and build upon them. In this way, they will be provided with stepping stones to success and will be more likely to remain in the teaching profession

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APPENDIX I: Main Reasons for Choosing Teaching (Adapted from Low et al, 2006)

From the questionnaires, nine themes were identified as different main reasons for choosing to become a teacher. The different themes are listed as Categories of Main Reasons in the Table, accompanied by examples of statements made by participants to explain the basis why that theme was identified.

The category *Love for Children/Young People* captured those statements which described the respondents' expressions of his/her liking for children and youth. Associated with these positive feelings were also the expressed desires to work with, or teach children.

Passion for Teaching category includes those reasons that described respondents' keen interest to teach. Often, respondents reported that they had some experience in teaching and found it to be fulfilling thus reinforcing their interest in the career.

Those responses that described some goals to be accomplished were categorised as *To Fulfill a Mission*. The statements under this theme tend to describe a desired outcome that is driven by a sense of mission like developing children, or helping them to achieve success. Others mentioned that they wanted to contribute to society, having benefited from their own education.

Job Factor / Fit: This category captures those statements that describe the desirability of teaching as a career, which includes the nature of the job (e.g. the job is challenging, it provides

life-long learning or it provides security), its suitability to the respondent, and the opportunities that the job offers.

Some joined the teaching profession because they were *Inspired by Role Models*. The role models reported could be former teachers of the respondents, but may also include parents, and others who had played the inspiring role to them.

There are responses that seem to describe a need *To Answer a Higher Calling* that can be achieved through teaching. Student teachers in this category reported a desire to enter into teaching because it allows them to be able to respond to that calling.

There are those who reported a keen interest in a subject area which they would like to impart to their students eventually. Those athletically inclined would like to promote sports and physical education, and likewise those with a passion for the sciences would wish to teach and develop young scientists. Hence, those who responded in this manner are categorised under *For the Love of the Subject*.

Those reasons provided which are related to salary and the financial rewards from the job are categorised under *Financial Reasons*. These could include the perceived good salary to be drawn, and the salary to be drawn while still studying which helped to alleviate financial difficulties.

Student Teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Career

	CATEGORY	Examples of Statements
1.	Love of Children / Young people	I enjoy and I love to interact with kids. I like to interact with young people
2.	Passion for Teaching	Innate feelings that I would be a great teacher one day. I have an interest in teaching and had taught before.
3.	To Fulfill a Mission	To see students grow up. I like to help weaker students succeed. To pull students out of the cycle of poverty. To give back to society.
4.	Job Factor or Fit	It is a challenging job. Wanted a dynamic career. It offers high job security The job offers life-long learning opportunities.
5.	Inspired by Role Models	My Beloved primary school teacher had inspired me to be a teacher. I am inspired by teachers who loved their subjects and taught passionately
6.	To Answer a Calling	To answer the call of God. I feel that children are my calling and I would like to influence children and inspire them to reach for their dreams.
7.	For the Love of the Subject	Possibility of applying computer (IT) skills to teaching. I have a passion for wanting to teach math to young people
8.	Financial Reasons	I feel that the starting pay is good. I was offered a scholarship by MOE and accepted it because my parents can't afford to send me to university.
9.	Teaching as a Stepping Stone	I like to start my own school.
10.	Others	I'm not very sure the MAIN reason. Many small reasons and contributing factors helped in this choice. Push factors from previous job.

There are statements which do not fall into any of the themes identified and whose frequency

counts may not warrant a separate category. Such statements are categorised into *Others*.

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